

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached two sheets of drawings include changes to Figures 2A, 2B and 26 (as shown in red). Please substitute the attached replacement sheets (pages 2/71 and 26/71) for the originally filed sheets of drawings.

Attachment: Annotated Sheets Showing Changes
Replacement Sheets

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-33 stand in the present application, claims 21-23 having been amended. Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's allowance of claims 26-31 and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 10-13, but respectfully submit that in view of the above amendments and the following remarks that all of the claims standing in the present application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to the drawings and the specification for a number of technical deficiencies. As noted above, Applicants have submitted annotated sheets for Figures 2A, 2B and 26 showing corrections made in red ink. The changes to the drawings have been made in the attached replacement sheets.

The Examiner has rejected claims 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. As noted above, Applicants have amended these claims to comply with the written description. See present specification at pages 102-110. Accordingly, the Examiner's § 112, second paragraph, rejection of these claims is believed to have been overcome.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24, 25 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Mueller et al. (Mueller) and has rejected claims 4, 7, 8, 15, 17, 19 and 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mueller. In view of the attached Rule 131 declaration of the inventors, it is respectfully submitted that Mueller no longer constitutes prior art against

the present claims and therefore that the claims are in condition for allowance as will be described in greater detail below.

As noted in the attached 37 CFR 1.131 Declaration of Hiroto Tamaki, Suguru Takashima, Masatoshi Kameshima and Takahiro Naitou, the inventions defined by the present claims were conceived prior to October 14, 2002, which is the earliest possible effective date for the Mueller reference. See Exhibit A, attached inventors' declaration. Evidence of the earlier conception date for the amended claims is provided in the exhibits attached to the aforementioned Rule 1.131 Declaration.

In addition, as noted in the aforementioned Declaration which establishes two of the foreign priority documents prior to the October 14, 2002 earliest effective filing date of the cited references also establishes that the inventions as reflected in the present claims were diligently reduced to practice by October 16, 2002 when the aforementioned priority documents were filed in the Japanese Patent Office. Certified translations of these two priority documents as well as all of the other priority documents identified in this case were previously filed in this case.

Since the inventions described by the amended claims establish an earlier conception date than the cited references and were diligently reduced to practice from a date prior to the date of the cited references, i.e., October 14, 2002, until October 16, 2002, two days later when the priority documents were filed in the Japanese Patent Office, the cited references do not constitute proper prior art against the present amended claims. Since all of the Examiner's rejections of the present claims are based on Mueller, it is respectfully submitted that all of the Examiner's claim rejections should

be withdrawn. Accordingly, all of the claims remaining in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered together with the attached Rule 1.131 Declaration and the attached exhibits, as well as the certified translations of all priority documents and that all of claims 1-32, standing in the application, be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a supplemental response or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

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2/71

Fig. 2 A

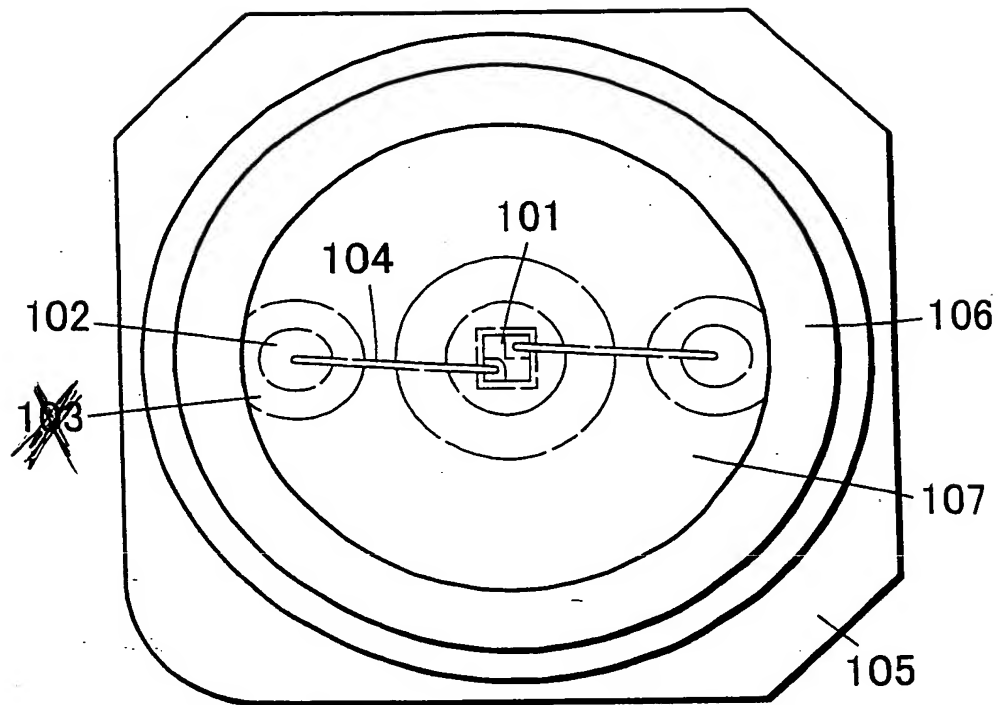
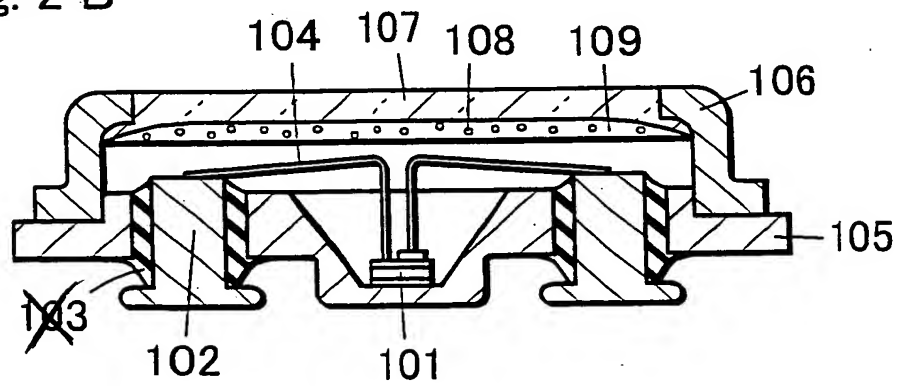


Fig. 2 B



26/71

Fig. 26

